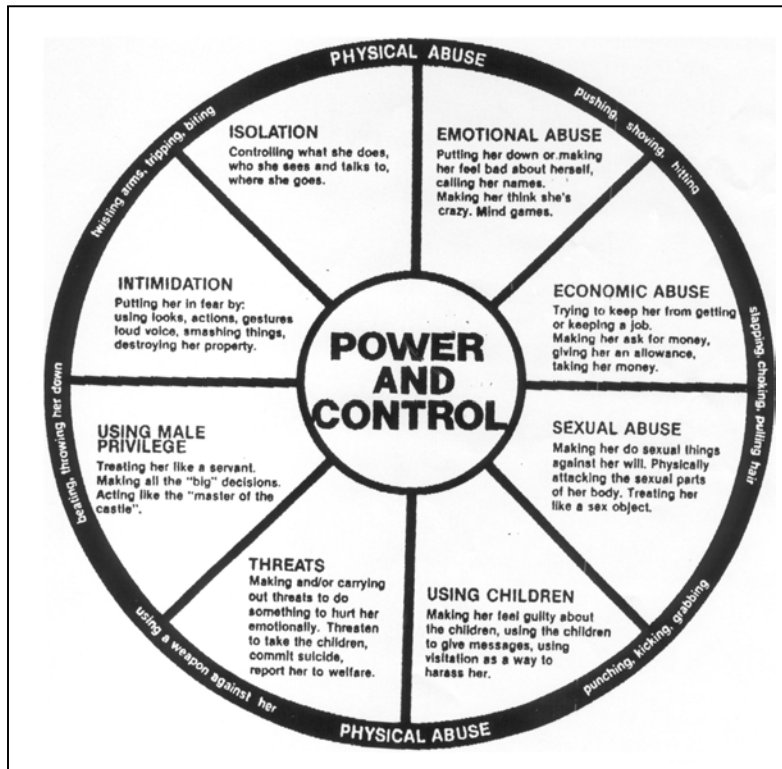


CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

AND WARNING SIGNS FOR ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

NC Council for Women

This cycle follows a predictable path that is deftly illustrated with the “power and control” wheel shown below.



This wheel shows various types of abuse from sexual to emotional and economic. It also shows how other behavior ties into abuse. Behaviors such as using threats on the children or isolation are various tactics used by abusers to inflict harm on their victims.

For many the cycle of violence starts with Phase I or increased tension, anger, blaming and arguing. This phase generally leads to Phase 2 of battering, hitting, slapping, kicking, choking, use of objects or weapons, sexual abuse, verbal threats and other abuse. The third phase is the calm stage that often decreases over time. During Phase 3, many abusers deny violence, apologize or blame drugs and alcohol. Mostly they promise that the abuse will never occur again. Sadly though, the violence usually continues and escalates until it results in serious harm or death.

Long-term violence has many detrimental effects on our society. For many women the effects are low self-esteem, permanent physical damage and sometimes death. For men there is increased contact with law enforcement, decreased self-esteem and an increased belief that

power and control are achieved by violence. The effects on children are emotional problems, illness, increased fears and anger, and often repetition of the abusive behavior. For society in general, violence increases legal, police, medical and counseling costs, perpetuates the cycle of violence, decreases the quality of life and perpetuates myths of inequality of women and men.